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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN EU PRESIDENCY STATEMENT ON THE BOMBING OF
THE IMAM ALI-HADI MOSQUE IN SAMARRA

REF: VIENNA 562

1. Following is the text of the statement by the Austrian
Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the bombing of
the Imman Ali-Hadi Mosque in Samarra.

BEGIN TEXT

The European Union condemns the criminal and sacrilegious
bombing of the Imman Ali-Hadi Mosque in Samarra on 22
February which has provoked sectarian strife. It undermines
peace and stability with the risk of derailing the political
process in Iraq.

This horrendous attack on one of the holiest Shiite religious
sites in Iraq, which is not only a place holy to Shiite
worshippers but part of the national cultural heritage of all
Iraqis, and the loss of life in the subsequent retaliatory
events show the urgent need for all communities in Iraq for
maximum restraint.

The European Union strongly supports calls by Iraqi political
and religious leaders for restraint and non-retaliation and
urges Iraq to come together in a spirit of dialogue and
mutual respect as the indispensable basis for national
reconciliation.
McCaw